



Notes from LEAD Editor

*Strong leaders have the ability to inspire and motivate those around them. Although many leaders are believed to be naturally charismatic, the good news is that many leadership traits can be learned. This month in **LEAD** you will find articles discussing key characteristics of successful leaders, as well as important tips on how to strengthen and expand your leadership abilities.*

LEARN TO BE A LEADER AT WORK

Most organizations have at least one person who is a natural leader. When this person offers to lead a new team, employees line up to join. These leaders are often considered mentors or role models. So, what do these people do to get others energized and eager to jump onboard?

Although many effective leaders are naturally charismatic, a number of leadership behaviors can be adopted by anyone who wants to find greater support from other people. People naturally want to follow a good leader. After meeting with an effective leader, it is not unusual to feel inspired and motivated to work towards a common goal. Effective leaders make others feel good about themselves – as well as the work they do. A real leader knows what to achieve and can communicate that vision to others in a way that makes people want to be part of it. Each employee can see how his or her particular role makes a contribution to the final result.

Good Role Models

If a leader demonstrates a strong belief in something, it inspires others to work towards the vision, even when a situation might appear to be almost hopeless. Maintain a can-do attitude and you are likely to attract people who will support you in achieving goals. A positive outlook and passion for work can really make a difference when a project needs the extra effort or support to push it ahead. Also, leaders understand that they need to maintain two-way communication with employees. This allows employees to be informed and take part in finding solutions when things are not going right.

Motivational Secrets

Besides communicating an effective vision, good leaders know they need to offer individual rewards. Different people are motivated by different things. For those motivated by a need for achievement, a leader

explains how the task offers an opportunity to take on a challenging but achievable goal. Those with a desire for power are told how their participation can bring prestige and greater opportunities. Employees motivated by affiliation need to feel like part of a team of people working together.

Lastly, good leaders introduce employees by name, not job title. They refer to employees as team members, associates, or colleagues, not as subordinates. No distinction is made between "essential" and "non-essential" staff or "professional" and "non-professional" staff. Words have power, including the power to make people feel unimportant to the success of an organization.

–Adapted from the e-book "How to Be a Leader at Work" by Tag Goulet, For more information visit www.fabjob.com

KEY TRAITS OF SUCCESSFUL LEADERS

In the past, managers were expected to maintain the status quo in order to move ahead, but now new forces in the marketplace have made it necessary to expand this narrow focus. The new leaders of tomorrow are visionaries. They are both learners and teachers. They have a strong sense of ethics and work to build integrity in their organizations. These new visionaries have several things in common.

Emotional stability. Leaders must be able to work in a fast paced, sometimes uncertain environment. They must be well adjusted and have a positive attitude to deal with anything they are required to face.

Enthusiasm. Leaders are usually seen as active, expressive, and energetic. They are often very optimistic and open to change. They are generally quick and alert.

Conscientiousness. Leaders are often dominated by a sense of duty and tend to be self-disciplined. They usually have a very high standard of excellence and an inward desire to do one's best.

Social boldness. Leaders tend to be judicious risk-takers. They are responsive to others and tend to be high in emotional stamina.

Tough-mindedness. Good leaders are practical, logical, and to-the-point. They tend to be poised and comfortable with criticism.

Self-assurance. Self-confidence and resiliency are common traits among leaders. They are generally secure and are able to learn from prior mistakes or failures.

–Adapted from "Key Traits of Successful Leaders," Online Women's Business Center, Dallas, TX, 1997





UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP

What makes a leader? Anyone can be an effective leader in his or her organization. Below are some ideas to help improve your leadership toolbox.

Communicate People accomplish more when they fully understand the significance of their individual contribution. Discuss with staff what you expect and need from them, and most importantly, what they need from you.

Be who you are Being one's self is paramount for a leader. Know who you are and what you represent. Develop a reputation for being a person of integrity and who lives by high standards of conduct and ethics.

Respect others Treat line employees with the same respect as you do the CEO of the company. Remember, the position you hold as a leader is not what causes people to follow your lead. It is your character, competence, and commitment to think, say, and do the right things.

Solicit and be open to ideas Ask for ideas and input from others. Show them you value them by acknowledging excellent ideas and acting on them.

Gain commitment Don't overlook asking for, and checking the commitment of staff regarding their participation. Don't proceed with the project until you have asked each stakeholder where he or she stands and where their level of commitment is.

Empower people For organizations to gain and maintain a positive competitive edge, everyone in the organization needs to be empowered as a leader. Managers can't afford to hold all leadership decisions for themselves. They are neither informed nor competent enough to make every decision.

Acknowledge and affirm Most everyone wants to be genuinely valued and appreciated. Focus on what people are doing right and affirm them regarding the specifics of it. Too many times the only feedback that is provided is corrective, not affirmative.

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(888) 648-5552, E-mail: macadam@mbsnet.com
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HOW TO BE A GREAT LEADER

Leaders of today must possess traits which will help them motivate others and lead them in new directions. Leaders of the future must be able to envision the future and convince others that the vision is worth following. To do this, the following personality traits are important:

High energy. Hard work and dedication are usually a prerequisite for leadership positions. Remaining alert and staying focused are two of the greatest obstacles you will have to face as a leader.

Intuitiveness. Rapid changes in the world today, combined with information overload result in an inability to "know" everything. Reasoning and logic will not get you through all situations. In fact, more and more leaders are learning the value of using their intuition and trusting their "gut" when making decisions.

Maturity. To be a good leader, personal power and recognition must be secondary to the development of employees. In other words, maturity is based on recognizing that more can be accomplished by empowering employees than can be by ruling employees.

Team orientation. Business leaders today put a strong emphasis on teamwork. Instead of promoting an adult/child relationship with employees, leaders create an adult/adult relationship which fosters team cohesiveness.

Empathy. Being able to "put yourself in the other person's shoes" is a key trait of leaders today. Without empathy, you can't build trust. And without trust, you will never be able to get the best effort from employees.

Charisma. Leaders who have charisma are able to arouse strong emotions in employees by defining a vision which unites and captivates them. Using this vision, leaders motivate employees to reach toward a future goal by tying the goal to substantial personal rewards and values.

Leaders are rarely (if ever) born. Circumstances and persistence are major components in the developmental process of any leader. So if your goal is to become a leader, work on developing those areas of your personality that you feel are not "up to par."

-Adapted from "Key Traits of Successful Leaders," Online Women's Business Center, Dallas, TX, 1997

